

**Maryland
Work-Based
Learning
Collaborative
(MWBLC)**



**Request for
Proposal**

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Rehabilitation Services
2301 Argonne Drive
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

Release Date
April 3, 2017

Deadline for Application
May 19, 2017
11:59 p.m. EST

Notification Date
On or before
June 2, 2017

This document is available in alternate formats

| PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION | |
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| Name of Grant Program | Maryland Work-Based Learning Collaborative (MWBLC) |
| Authorization | Federal Grant H2421B160006, CFDA# 84.421B #84, Disability Innovation Fund, U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration. |
| Deadline | All required grants submissions must be emailed or mailed by May 19, 2017 . See Application Submission Instructions, page 3 for details. |
| Purpose | <p>The Maryland Work-based Learning Collaborative (<i>MWBLC</i>) aims to improve the lives of students with disabilities in Maryland by increasing their academic, career, and financial success. The purpose is to enable local education agencies (LEAs) in Maryland to implement a model of school to career transition services for students with disabilities. The project includes a randomized control design implemented across 6- 8 diverse school districts in Maryland for 400 students; half receiving services as usual and half receiving the enhanced services (treatment group).</p> <p>The <i>MWBLC</i> model incorporates four empirically supported components robustly associated with post-school success for youth with disabilities. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Early engagement with the Division of Rehabilitation Services' (DORS) Pre-Employment Transitioning Services Program (Pre-ETS); 2. Multiple work experiences; 3. Paid employment; and 4. Focused collaboration between schools, DORS, local community rehabilitation providers (CRPs), workforce centers, and other partners. <p>The project supports and promotes the State Performance Plan (SPP) Annual Performance Plan (APR)]for Indicators 13 and 14 by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator 13 - Promoting results of youth aged 16 and above with an individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet their post-secondary goals; (<i>have adequate goals and transition services</i>); and • Indicator 14 - Promoting the increased numbers of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in school and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary schools, or both, within one year of leaving high school (<i>connecting the data, determine if students are competitively employed or enrolled in postsecondary school or both</i>). <p>The outcomes of the project are to: 1) improve competitive integrated employment consistent with students' career goals; 2) increase economic self-sufficiency; 3) ensure high school completion and linkages to post-school services and supports consistent with students' goals; 4) improve service system collaboration to reduce systemic barriers & sustain effective service coordination; 5) demonstrate the efficacy of the model to improve outcomes and impacts of youth with disabilities for replicability and sustainability.</p> |
| Required Components | To be approved, applicants must address all components of the competitive criteria specified in the RFP. |

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| Priorities | Priority will be given to applicants that demonstrate readiness to meet the requirements set forth in this RFP and best explain how the LEA will implement, with fidelity, <i>MWBLC</i> services to students (in the treatment group). |
| Eligible Applicants | Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in Maryland |
| Proposal Review | The review of proposals will be conducted as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grant applications will undergo a technical review upon submission to ensure completeness. 2. A Review Committee established by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)/ Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) will evaluate applications using a scoring rubric outlined in this RFP. 3. Applicants may be contacted for clarifications as determined by the review committee. 4. Final approval for awards will be determined by the Review Committee. |
| Award Notifications | The successful applicant will be notified of the grant award on or before June 2, 2017. |
| Estimated Total Funds Available | Up to \$50,000 per awardee |
| Grant Period | 24 months |
| Number and Award of Grants | Six to eight LEA sites will be selected to receive up to \$50,000 for this award. Special Note: 3 to 4 awards for State Fiscal Years 2018-2019 and 3 to 4 awards for State Fiscal Years 2019-2020 |
| Fund Use (Restricted) | Cost(s) incurred outside the grant period (e.g., prior to the approval of the funding) may not be funded through the grant award. Funds may be used for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel expenses, including salaries and fringe, or stipends for staff supporting <i>MWBLC</i> in their LEA. • Project materials and supplies to support the implementation of the <i>MWBLC</i> services. • Per diem and travel rates for project staff participating in professional development activities who can claim expenses from this grant. |
| The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), Section 427 | Each application must develop and describe the steps such applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the project or activity to be conducted with such assistance, by addressing the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in order to overcome barriers to <u>equitable participation</u> . |
| Certification Statement | Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transactions |
| Reporting Requirements | Grantees must submit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly progress and financial reports to DORS; • A final report encompassing all funding cycles, within 60 days of the end of the grant period; and • Regular tracking of student services and progress per the templates provided. |

| PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION | |
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| Submission Requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Narrative cannot exceed 10 pages, excluding the forms required for submission. The narrative must use one-inch margins, double line spacing, and 12 point font. Chart may use single spacing and type size of 10-point font. • Required forms and letters of commitment do not count toward the 10 page limit. • The summary must not exceed one page. • All copies of the proposal should be on standard size (8½" x 11") paper of regular weight. • The prescribed coversheet must be the first page of the proposal. • The original coversheet and assurances page must be signed in blue ink • If sent electronically with blue ink signatures, do not send hard copies • If the ability to scan is not available, three (3) hard copies of the complete proposal must be mailed. • Mailed and/or Electronic copies must be submitted by May 19, 11:59 pm 2017. <p style="text-align: center;">Submit applications to: Maryland State Department of Education Division of Rehabilitation Services 2301 Argonne Drive Baltimore, Maryland 21218 Attention: Jill Pierce, Specialist Transition Services jill.pierce@maryland.gov</p> |
| Technical Assistance | <p>Two (2) optional pre-proposal information calls will be hosted on April 19, 2017 at noon ET and April 25, 2017 at 4:00 ET. If interested, it is only necessary to participate in one of these pre-proposal information calls. Call number: 1-866-247-6034 Conference call code : 6821843109#</p> |

Non-discrimination Statement:

The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, or disability, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to program. For inquiries related to Department policy, please contact:

Equity Assurance and Compliance Branch, Maryland State Department of Education, 200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2595; Voice: (410) 767-0426 TTY/TDD: (410) 333-6442 FAX: (410) 767-0431

The Maryland Work-Based Learning Collaborative (MWBLC)

Applicants may apply for up to \$50,000 for a two-year period, starting from date of grant award.

I. Background

The goal of the Maryland Work-based Learning Collaborative (*MWBLC*) is to assist Maryland LEAs and their community partners to implement a model of school to career transition services for students with disabilities. The model must include individualized work-based learning components and paid work experiences to improve career outcomes for students with disabilities.

The key requirement of this project will be the involvement of DORS well in advance of projected school exit. Through DORS Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and other DORS transition services, students with disabilities will be afforded resources that have so far been mostly unavailable, or very sporadically available. Actively collaborating with DORS counselors will therefore be a key requirement of LEAs who receive a grant.

Components of the MWBLC program services:

The MWBLC will be implemented at 6-8 selected LEAs in Maryland of which 3 to 4 will be awarded for State Fiscal Years covering 2018 - 2019 and 3 to 4 for State Fiscal Years 2019 - 2020. The MWBLC model incorporates four empirically supported components robustly associated with post-school success for students with disabilities. These include:

1. Early DORS engagement: participants will receive services from DORS per Pre-Employment Transition Services Program (Pre-ETS).
2. Multiple work-based learning experiences: participants will engage in multiple work experiences. These experiences must be structured and will reflect student choices and interests.
3. Paid employment: participants will hold at least one community-based integrated paid job prior to school exit (paid directly by the employer).
4. Focused collaboration between schools, DORS, local community rehabilitation providers (CRPs), local workforce centers and other community partners that support employment and/or people with disabilities: through the joint planning between these partners and through the blending of partner resources, including DORS Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) funds, students will participate in work experience opportunities and jobs.

The Model:

The *MWBLC* model is operationalized through a team approach involving key members at each of the LEA implementation sites, including a DORS counselor, an LEA representative (who will also serve as liaison to project management staff), local CRP(s), post-secondary education personnel, workforce center staff, and employers (via the local BLNs where available). Each local level team (called the *MWBLC* Interagency Team or MIAT) will have the LEA representative serve as the lead MIAT team member. As lead, this person will be responsible for monitoring coordination of services, data collection, DORS referrals, negotiating inter-agency barriers and/or conflicts, and facilitating the design and implementation of the student's plan ensuring alignment of services and goals. This person will work directly with the University of Maryland (UMD) Technical Assistance support staff. In addition, it is critical that each site consider designating staff responsible for employer outreach to achieve the individualized work-based learning and paid employment experiences, with accountability to these outcomes.

I.A. Target Population and LEA Student Recruitment Process

Eligible students at each selected LEA site include students who are two years from school exit (whether they are receiving a diploma or certificate) and have either an IEP or a 504 plan, and whose parents or guardians consent to their enrollment in the *MWBLC* Model. The application process requires LEAs to estimate the total eligible sample pool (students two years from school exit with an IEP or 504 plan) to achieve the enrollment targets within the first year of the award.

Recruitment of eligible students to participate in the *MWBLC* at each site is based on a randomized control study design. This means that each selected LEA will work with *MWBLC* project staff to inform all eligible students and their parents or guardians about the availability of the project within their LEA. Students and parents/guardians who consent to participate in the study will be randomly assigned to either the "enhanced services (*MWBLC*) group" or the "usual services" group after they provide consent or assent and complete a baseline survey. The "enhanced services" group will receive the full *MWBLC* intervention, and the "usual services" group will continue to receive the services that they are usually eligible for within their LEA (including the Pre-ETS services offered to all DORS eligible students with disabilities). Random assignment means that each consenting participant has a 50/50 chance of being in the enhanced services or the usual services group. In other words, LEAs will not select students for participation in the *MWBLC* enhanced services group. Because the *MWBLC* Model is a randomized design research study, target recruitment goals (e.g., number of students who consent to participate) will be established for each selected LEA. It is important to note that recruitment and enrollment activities at each selected LEA will NOT occur until the research protocol and consent forms have been approved by the University of Maryland's Institutional Review Board.

I.B. Technical Assistance

The University of Maryland (UMD) is the contracted partner with DORS to implement this project. UMD will be responsible for all related implementation technical assistance to the selected sites. This technical assistance will be for the purposes of ensuring implementation fidelity across sites and to design, oversee and assist with project related data collection and maintenance. A site-specific training and technical assistance plan will guide the development and implementation of the project activities, along with a detailed general project implementation guide. Technical assistance may include:

- Training and support in work-based learning and employment outreach strategies;
- Assistance and support in partnership development with members of the local MWBLC interagency team, including helping to facilitate meetings of the team;
- Group performance development using a team approach, creative and critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and action-oriented strategies;
- Peer networking and mentoring from other MWBLC sites; and
- Data collection and management related to project implementation.

I.C. Project Management Plan

The UMD Technical Assistance Team will assist all selected LEAs in developing project management plan to help guide the implementation of the intervention and meeting benchmarks. Below is an example of the tasks to be completed.

Personnel

- Finalize project personnel within 1 month of project start
- Establish and convene *MWBLC* Interagency Team (or MIAT) for model implementation and confirm roles, responsibilities and commitment to participate within 2 months of project start
- Establish monthly calendar of meetings and meeting processes within 3 months of project start

Student Recruitment

- Identify all eligible students in the district within first month of project start date
- Initiate dissemination of project information and recruitment materials to eligible students and families within 2 months or project staff & ongoing until recruitment goals achieved

- Host recruitment events in partnership with UMD staff within 4 months of project start

Service Delivery

- Work with TA staff to develop implementation plan and associated materials within 2 months of project start
- Receive training and TA from UMD (initially within one month of project start, then ongoing as necessary)
- Engage students with DORS for Pre-ETS funding within 6 months of students' enrollment
- Conduct career exploration activities
 - Career Exploration completed within 2-3 months of enrollment with quarterly updates
 - Job Search Plan based on interests & skills created within 3-4 months of enrollment
- Work with partners to develop IPE for students and align with IEP within first 5 months of enrollment and updated quarterly
- Work with partners to facilitate work based learning (WBL) experiences for students based on skills and interests
 - First WBL experience within 7 months of enrollment
 - Second WBL experience within 12-15 months of enrollment
 - If appropriate, third WBL experience within last 10 months before exit/end of project
- Work with partners to facilitate paid employment for participating student
 - Within second year of enrollment/final year before exit
- As determined by student IEP, link student to postsecondary education and training opportunities within second year of enrollment/final year before exit

Data Collection

- As determined by research objectives of overall project, work with TA and research staff to facilitate data collection determined to be essential for project evaluation and implementation fidelity
- Track service delivery and outcomes determined to be essential for project evaluation

diversity in size and capacity for enrollment requirements smaller LEAs may either form a consortium or receive funds on a prorated basis per the number of eligible of students.

(c) Key Personnel (10 points)

- Demonstrate that your project has the appropriate staff capacity and partners to meet the requirement of this project.
- Describe generally your current partnerships that would support the project's goals;
- Identify the individual who would take on the role of lead LEA liaison;
- Identify key partners (include letters of commitment);
- Identify the individual or agency/organization who would be responsible for employer outreach and job development and placements activities;
- Identify which partner will provide work based learning experiences (e.g., CRP, AJC, LEA);
- List and explanation of any other staff involvement; and
- Ensure equal access and equitable participation in the project of people with disabilities

(d) Letters of Commitment (10 points)

Letters of commitment are required from all project partners, the LEA Superintendent's office, and local education agencies participating in the project. A good letter should contain the following:

- A statement acknowledging and supporting the goal and objectives of the project;
- The participant's expected gains from the project;
- The expertise, resources and financial contributions the participant is making towards the project;
- Financial contributions (in-kind and cash) should be quantified;
- A clear statement detailing the responsibilities of the partners; and
- A clear statement that the partners intend to continue the partnership beyond the grant period.

Letters of commitment should be addressed to the superintendent. Letters should not be addressed to MSDE/DORS. All letters should be included in the proposal and not sent directly to MSDE/DORS. Any letters sent directly to MSDE cannot be appended to the proposal. NOTE: THESE DO NOT APPLY TO THE 10 PAGE LIMIT.

Budget and Budget Narrative

Total Points10

No page limit

The budget should detail every year of the project in a separate itemized budget for each year. It should demonstrate the extent to which the budget is reasonable, is cost-effective, and integrates other sources of funding. All costs described in the project narrative will appear in the budget narrative and must have a corresponding entry in the itemized budget for that year.

The attached budget template must be used in specifying project costs.

Appendices

No page limit

Total Points 0

The following Appendices must be included but not apply to the page limit of the Project Narrative. Include other Appendices as you deem necessary.

- MSDE (Recipient Assurances) - *signed*
- Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion (*signed*)
- Budget Narrative/Justification
- Letters of Support
- Reference Section – Use a standard format such as APA or Chicago Manual of Style.

TOTAL MAXIMUM POINTS 50